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English in Action: innovation using mobile for classroom and adult learning in Bangladesh

Conference or Workshop Item

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ENGLISH ACTION

Changing Learning. Changing Lives.



Goal and Target

Project Goal

- Contribute to economic development in Bangladesh by providing English as a tool for better access to the world economy

Project Target

- Improve English language skills of 25 million primary and secondary students and adult learners by 2017

To reach and impact on

25 million Bangladeshi

school pupils and adult learners

Project Components

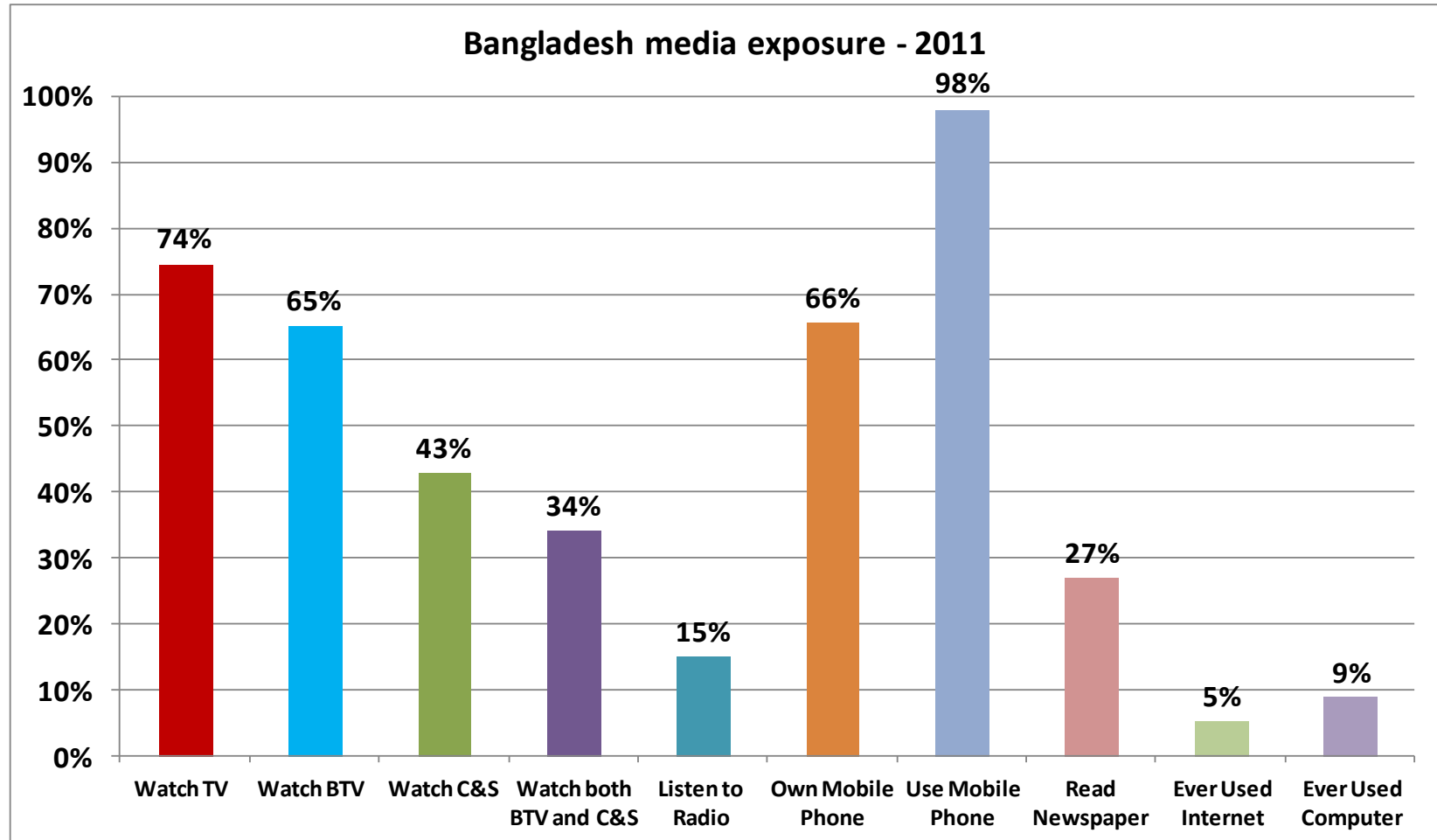
There are two project components:

- Schools Initiative
- Media and Adult Learning Initiative

Both use mobiles as a device for content delivery.



Why Mobile?



Schools Initiative

Teacher Education in Bangladesh

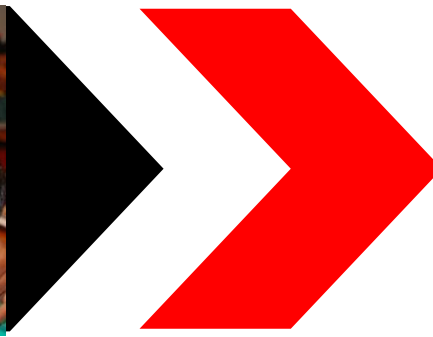
Weakness in structure, content, delivery:

- One shot training
- Away from classroom reality
- Little coordination between and among different structures
- Lack of implementation
- Back log of untrained teachers

Schools Initiative: Primary and Secondary

Target

75,000 teachers,
10 million students
34,500 schools



Schools Initiative

Aim

- Changes in teachers' practices
- Enhanced English language proficiency of both students and teachers

Strategy

- New learning activities for use during classroom teaching
- Continuous support for teachers:
 - Face to face contact
 - Print, audio video materials

Aligning all materials
with existing **government**
prescribed

textbooks

Teacher Professional Development

- Mobiles are used to deliver audio materials directly to students
- Mobiles are used to deliver audio and video materials to teachers for their own professional development

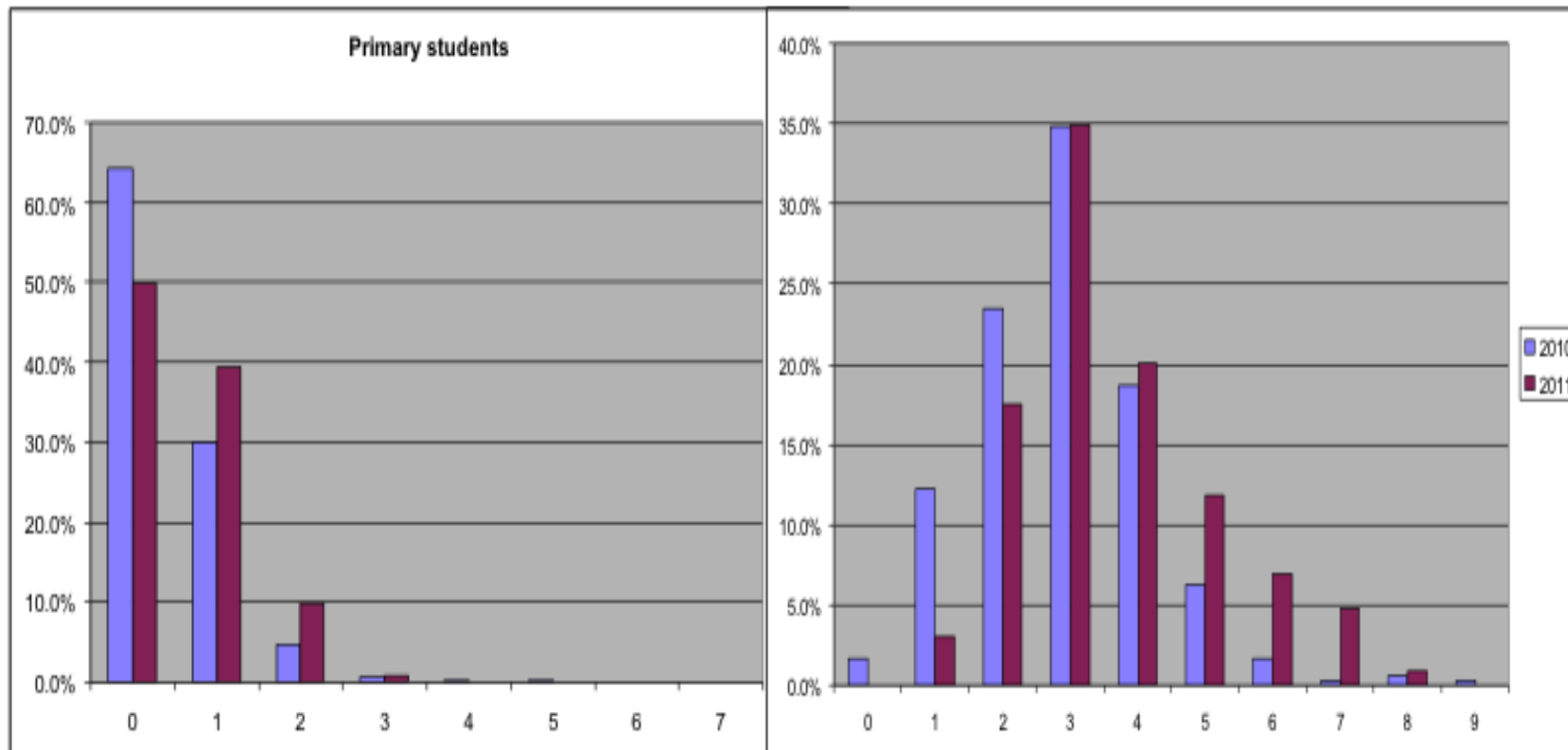


Changes in classroom practice

- Baseline surveys (2009) showed teachers and students doing very little talking in their English lesson.
- Changes in classroom practice included:
 - Teachers and students generally talking more during lessons
 - Most of this talk was in English, one third of the lesson time for primary teachers and 50% for secondary
 - Student talk time for both primary and secondary was around a quarter (25%) of the lesson time.

(Source: Power et al, 2012)

Primary students and teachers



(Source: Shaheen et al; 2013)

Media and Adult Learning Initiative



BBC

জানা লা

চাইলেই পারছেন!!



ENGLISH  ACTION

- **Two audience-focussed aims:**
 - Reduce barriers and improve perception of English learning
 - Provide accessible, affordable English language learning materials

Multi-platform project

Television



Mobile



Web & WAP



English Clubs



Audio CDs



Print



Multi-platform project

Television



Mobile



Web & WAP



English Clubs



Audio CDs



Print



Why English language teaching?

- 84% of adults (15-45) want to learn English
 - To teach children
 - To get a (better) job
- 64% are embarrassed to speak English.
- 47% consider English to be too expensive to learn.
- 44% feel that English is difficult to learn.
- 38% feel that learning English is only available to those able to afford it.
- 28% feel unable to learn English.

Scanning the market

- Higher end is well supplied – English learning apps
- SMS is popular and effective:
 - Cyprus: Vocabulary
 - Mongolia: English for work (Health sciences university)
 - India, Indonesia, China, Nigeria: Nokia Life Tools
 - Tunisia: English quizzes (US embassy, Tunis)
- Mobile web & SD-card content growing
- Voice-based services are rarer:
 - India: English Seekho (Tata Indicom)
 - Bangladesh: BBC Janala

Voice, backed up by text

- Feature phones dominate market – particularly amongst BBC Janala target audience
- Target audience is not predominately text savvy
- Very few handsets support Bangla SMS – and no standard for Bangla phonetic English
- Target is communicative English – and that means speaking & listening
- SMS bound by 159 characters – limited amount of content

Research led

- Formative research into needs and context
- Extensive pre-testing and piloting (content and user experience)
- Monitoring and responding to audience reactions and usage patterns
 - Navigation through service – one question at a time
 - Change of focus to progressive course
 - Lesson length
 - Level, amount, speed, repetition and accent of English content
 - Need for a “teacher”
 - Style and tone of Bangla
- Evaluating impact

Other keys to success

- Partnerships – mobile operators & regulator → universal access
- Simple, memorable shortcode
- Affordability
- Strong, simple brand
- Cross-promotion and co-learning alongside other platforms
- Breadth and depth of quality content
- Bangladesh-specific content, created by experts

Reach and impact

- 24 million have used at least one of our products and 42% have recommended a product to someone else
- More than 21 million calls to the mobile service
- Strong uptake from poorest 20% of population
- 6.8 million highly exposed
- 8.8 million feel they have learned some English
- 7.7 million say that they use the English they have learned
- Perceptions of difficulty and expense changing; while motivation increasing

Reach
 **24 million**
(2011),

 **6.8million**
highly engaged

Challenges

- Getting target group to use the services (find value and motivation)
- Sustainability of materials and methodologies (storage, updating, redevelopment locally) and services (in absence of donor funding)
- Changes in technology (mobile web, higher-end handsets) and curriculum (textbooks)
- Government uptake and resourcing
- Replacing/ repairing equipment
- Maintaining and extending freedom of user experience without compromising usability
- Desire to extend media component to children's audience

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BBC
MEDIA ACTION

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MEDIA
AROUND THE WORLD



The Open University

